BULLETIN ON AGEING

No. 1/1992

10th ANNIVERSARY: INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING

The year 1992 is a landmark in the field of ageing: the International Plan of Action on Ageing, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51, is 10 years old. Since that Plan was adopted at the World Assembly on Ageing, in 1982, ageing as an issue of global concern has entered the arena of international policy-making. There is today international recognition of the ageing of populations, with an attendant awareness of the need for major social and economic changes to accommodate the new reality. As well as marking the end of one decade, the year 1992 signals the beginning of a new one, a decade for action. Preparations for this anniversary year were discussed at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. A calendar of events is included in this issue of the Bulletin on Ageing.

The United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA) continues, in this issue, to report on national celebrations marking the first International Day for the Elderly, held on 1 October 1991. It is hoped that these reports will inspire other Member States and non-governmental organizations to celebrate their own elderly citizens in a festive and creative manner on 1 October 1992.

United Nations activities

General Assembly addresses the question of ageing

Representatives of 35 countries raised the question of ageing in their policy statements at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly: Albania, Algeria, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Brazil, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, France, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Yemen. The topic was introduced by the head of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV/CSDHA) and elaborated by the Director of the Social Development Division of UNOV/CSDHA.

The issues

The main issues raised during the ensuing deliberations were as follows: *(a)* target-setting for the year 2001;

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(b) observation of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing; *(c)* International Day for the Elderly; *(d)* the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, which would subsequently be adopted as the annex to resolution 46/91; *(e)* the third review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing; *(f)* the Banyan Fund Association: a World Fund for Ageing; and *(g)* the International Institute on Ageing (INIA), Malta.

Targets on ageing for the year 2001

It was decided that a practical strategy was needed to improve implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. A small expert group meeting to define targets on ageing would provide a pragmatic focus for the "broad and ideal goals" of the Plan of Action. Such targets could help Member States identify their specific national targets on ageing.

Tenth anniversary of the Plan of Action

It was agreed that in observation of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, four plenary meetings of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly would serve as an international conference on ageing. The United Nations Postal Administration was urged to issue a stamp to mark the anniversary year, and the United Nations was urged to consider issuing a medal on ageing bearing the emblem of the World Assembly on Ageing to mark activities planned for the decade 1992-2001. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations, UNOV/CSDHA, other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and non-governmental organizations were invited to launch a global information campaign on the action programme for 1992 and beyond.

International Day for the Elderly

The celebration of International Day for the Elderly on 1 October was referred to as being one very practical way of regularly drawing attention to the situation of the elderly.

United Nations Principles for Older Persons

One representative said that the first task of the international community in dealing with the ageing of populations was to acknowledge the important role that older people played in society. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons, she said, were a first step in that direction. Member States, the Department of Public Information, the regional commissions and non-governmental organizations were invited to disseminate the Principles at the local, national, regional and global levels, especially during 1992, the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Ageing. The Principles will be published in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Third global review and appraisal of activities

This review and appraisal, a quadrennial exercise mandated by the General Assembly, is aimed at assessing, at the global level, the implementation of the Plan of Action. Member States were called upon to participate in the inquiry for the third review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action, which would take place in the first half of 1992, and to take the occasion of the review to plan ahead, setting national targets on ageing for the year 2001. Member States and non-governmental organizations of the elderly were urged to second experts and administrative personnel to UNOV/CSDHA in 1992 and 1993 to help, *inter alia*, in the third review and appraisal.

The Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing

The Assembly noted with satisfaction the recent establishment, under the patronage of the United Nations, of the Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing. The main goal of this Fund was to secure or broker funds for activities that would support implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. Non-governmental organizations and the private sector were encouraged to continue collaborating closely with the United Nations system in the field of ageing.

Several representatives expressed support for the Fund. They said it was a new form of cooperation between the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

International Institute on Ageing

The representative of Malta reported on the short-term training courses in social gerontology, income security and geriatrics at INIA. He said that as of March 1991, INIA had received 237 applications for training courses from candidates from developing countries. Only 102 persons could be awarded scholarships, owing to a lack of funds.

Celebrating International Day for the Elderly, 1 October 1991, Hungary

Other issues raised

Other issues were raised in the debate: the ageing of populations would become most dramatic in poor countries; the public sector should adopt approaches that reached people outside the formal labour market, to supplement the support network of the family and community; greater attention ought to be paid to intergenerational and multisectoral solidarity; and the continued participation of the elderly in social and economic development required the concerted efforts of Governments, local communities and non-governmental organizations.

The resolutions

The General Assembly adopted resolutions 46/91 and 46/94, both of which dealt with the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. Resolution 46/91, *inter alia,* invited the Secretary-General to explore the feasibility of appointing an interregional adviser on ageing to assist developing countries in expanding their ability to respond effectively to the ageing of their populations. It recommended that the United Nations provide further advisory services to countries in the process of development, change and transition, at their request, to ensure that the issue of ageing remained an important part of their social development programmes. It also invited the United Nations to examine the feasibility of launching a service composed of experts who were elderly, modelled on the United Nations Volunteers.

Resolution 46/94, *inter alia,* called upon the specialized agencies and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system to give recognition to the contribution of the elderly to social and economic development in the context of major events and conferences of the 1990s, such as those dealing with the environment, human rights, the family, population and the advancement of women. It urged all organizations of the United Nations system and bilateral and multilateral development agencies to include the elderly in their development efforts. It also invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to include the elderly in the programmes of their social funds that aimed, *inter alia,* to alleviate poverty.

The resolutions are available from UNOV/CSDHA in the six official languages of the United Nations.

An elderly resident of San Mateo, Guatemala

United Nations Pledging Conference

At the United Nations Pledging Conference for operational activities, on 5 and 6 November 1991, Member States pledged the following amounts for ageing: Austria, S 100,000; Germany, DM 50,000; and the Republic of Korea, $US 5,000.

Expert group meeting on ageing and elderly women in development

An expert group meeting on the integration of ageing and elderly women into development was held at Vienna from 7 to 11 October 1991. The meeting was organized in co-operation with the American Association of Retired Persons and was attended by 11 experts, 2 consultants and 43 observers from Member States, bodies of the United Nations system, research institutes, universities and non-governmental organizations.

The meeting discussed both the current and future rate of ageing and older women in development. It dealt specifically with economic, health, social, cultural and legal issues and formulated conclusions and recommendations in each of these areas. It recommended, among other things, that older women be given access to credit, without age restrictions; that training and retraining be made available so that older women might enter or re-enter the labour force; and that age- and gender-related discrimination be eliminated in employment. The recommendations were to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-sixth session from 11 to 20 March 1992.

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International Day for the Elderly: national celebrations

The International Day for the Elderly, which was designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in resolution 45/106, was celebrated for the first time on 1 October 1991 in many countries throughout the world. The response of Governments and non-governmental organizations was enthusiastic. At UNOV/CSDHA, the Ageing Unit has been receiving a constant flow of reports on national celebrations worldwide. Some of these were described in the *Bulletin on Ageing*, No. 3/1991, and others are described in this issue. Considerations of space unfortunately limit the number of celebrations that can be noted here.

Australia

In a statement delivered on 1 October, Kath Bourke, President of the Australian Council on the Ageing, regretted that 6 per cent of older people, i.e. those living in retirement villages, nursing homes and other forms of residential accommodation, were to be omitted from the 1993 survey on disability and ageing. Mrs. Bourke urged the Government to fund that component of the survey that covered people not living in their own homes, because it was important to have reliable statistics for planning purposes.

The New South Wales Council on Ageing reports that it was successful in getting a few radio slots on 1 October 1991. It hopes for an even higher media profile, however, in 1992. The Council issued a press release offering 25 ideas for stories that could be produced about older people ("older people" being the term preferred by the Council, which says that it is also the term preferred by older people themselves). On the Day, the Council held an informal lunch for its volunteers, for the members of the Committee of Management and for staff.

Brazil

In Rio Claro, São Paulo state, the Day was celebrated in a variety of ways. There were news announcements on the radio and in the press. The special poster produced by the United Nations was displayed in the library of the Universidade Paulista. Celebratory activities received front-page coverage in the local newspaper, and General Assembly resolution 45/106 was quoted in another article in the same paper.

During the week, a gathering was held at a home for the elderly, Abrigo da Velhice São Vicente de Paula. Participating in the event were other local homes for the elderly, as well as members of the local community and some local associations. The main attraction was a rhythmic gymnastics display presented by students of the Centro Social do Bairo do Estádio. The event was sponsored by the Projeto do Idoso (Project for the Elderly).

Finland

The largest voluntary organization for the elderly in Finland, the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged, celebrated International Day for the Elderly on the first Sunday of October. The special theme in 1991 was "Old age — a resource". In the past, a special day, and the week that followed, had been set aside for the elderly. Now, the date of this event is being changed to 1 October, in line with the United Nations Internatio-

An intergenerational celebration of the first International Day for the Elderly, 1 October 1991, St. Francis Health Resort, Denville, New Jersey, United States of America

nal Day for the Elderly, and the celebratory week will be the first week in October.

Guatemala

The Gerontological Association of Guatemala reports that on 1 October 1991, the President of the Association, Jorge H. Hernández, and its adviser, Dr. Manuel Antonio Girón Mena, telecast a message nationwide on Channel 3. In cooperation with other organizations working with or for the elderly, including the National Committee for the Protection of the Elderly and the Centre of Integral Medical Attention for Retired Persons, a forum was organized to discuss the role of the mass media in educating the public on the "third age".

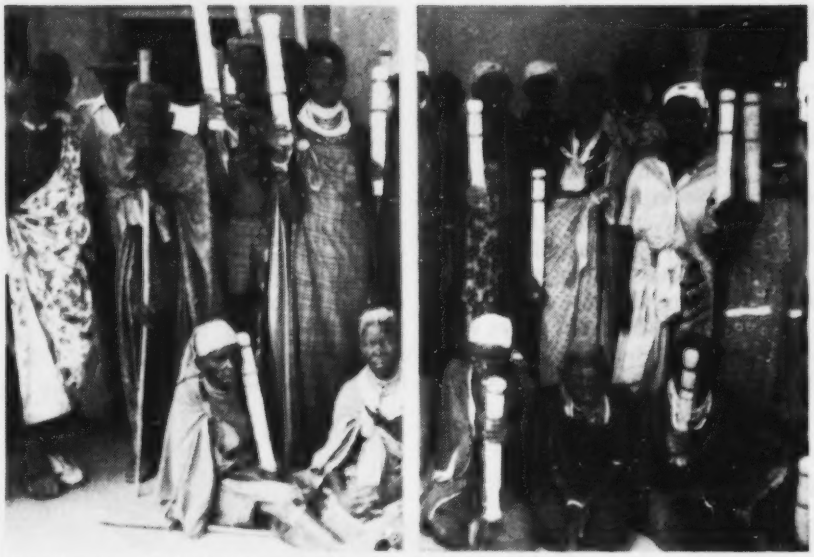
In November, which is celebrated in Guatemala as the Month of the Elderly (mes del envejecimiento), a workshop was organized on the ageing of middle aged and older women in Guatemala. On 29 November, the Day for the Elderly, the Minister for Health, Dr. Miguel Angel Montepeque, was presented with the book *Gerocultura*. The book, which was produced by Dr. Girón Mena, is intended as a practical guide to the health and social issues of the elderly and should be particularly helpful for medical, paramedical and social-service personnel working under the Ministry for Health.

Kenya

The caring agency Kenya Evangelism Team and Crusades, which is responsible for the Adopt-a-Granny project at Lodwar, in Turkana district, sent a colourful report of the celebrations on 1 October. The scene was lively and emotional, with nature lending its full support to the proceedings. The venue for the gathering was a church:

> "Clouds of smoke, which were seen meandering upwards, filled the space around. This was enough to tell the African eye that something was cooking (both literally and metaphorically). This smoke played a great role in inviting birds like crows, and other accompanying species. They could be seen sailing leisurely around the church in noisy groups, greeting the day!"

Present were grandparents, their children and grandchildren, and relatives and neighbours from nearby villages, as well as representatives of the caring agency itself and a government representative, Chief John Tioko Ewoi of Lodwar town. At the official opening ceremony, special tribute was paid to HelpAge Kenya and HelpAge International for their excellent work.



Grandparents displaying items handcrafted in their leisure time on the occasion of the International Day for the Elderly, 1 October 1991, Kenya

Republic of Korea

Although the Republic of Korea had already celebrated its elderly from 8 to 14 May 1991, the Government organized special training workshops from 1 to 18 October 1991 for 28,674 leaders of schools and clubs for the elderly; a seminar on improving welfare facilities for the elderly, on 4 October; and a festival of traditional games and sports for the elderly, on 9 October. Similar events were organized throughout the country by local governments.

Mauritius

The Senior Citizens Council, which functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity, organized a half-day seminar on 1 October in cooperation with the Mauritius Council of Social Service. The theme of the seminar was the role of the elderly in the year 2000 and after. Various organizations working with senior citizens attended.

Messages were also broadcast on the Day by the national broadcasting station, to raise awareness of the welfare of older persons in the community.

Spain

The community of foreign resident retirees on the Costa del Sol has reported on its get-together, which took place at Mijas on 1 October. Rather than listen to speeches, the retirees wanted to sing. The event, which was free of charge, was open to the general public. Song sheets containing popular melodies from all over the world were prepared by the organizer, Barbara Berch Jamison, and everybody present was invited to join in the singing.

Uruguay

Agrupación Nacional de Entidades Privadas Pro Bienestar Social del Anciano (ANEPA) celebrated International Day for the Elderly by holding a large cultural gathering in the Ateneo cultural centre at Montevideo. The ceremony was conducted entirely by seniors and consisted of choirs and a gymnastics display. Official messages of congratulations were read out.

Among those taking part in the ceremony were the Professor of Geriatrics and Gerontology from the medical faculty of the local university, representatives of organizations working either directly or indirectly with elderly persons, representatives of churches and clubs for the elderly, two writers and a poet. The ceremony was covered by the national media. From 21 to 26 October, ANEPA celebrated Uruguay's thirteenth annual Week of the Elderly.

Viet Nam

Bui The Cuong, Head of the Department of Social Policy at the Institute of Sociology, at Hanoi, reports that the Department carried out a project on population ageing and social security for the elderly in the north of Viet Nam. The project was funded by the Toyota Foundation. To introduce the activities of the project and discuss current problems of the Vietnamese elderly, with a view to improving their living conditions, the Department organized a workshop in conjunction with Voice of Viet Nam radio. The workshop was broadcast on 14 and 15 October 1991.

On 1 October a meeting took place of representatives from the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, the National Institute of Gerontology, the Institute of Sociology, the Development Research and Consultancy Centre and the Culture and Tourism Service Corporation. The establishment of a social research, consultancy and services centre for the elderly was one of the main items on the agenda of the meeting.

Country review

Bangladesh: land for the landless

The Resource Integration Centre (RIC) at Dhaka recently turned its attention to the needs of the elderly in rural areas of Bangladesh. In the Jinnardi Union area, RIC found that 11 per cent of the population was elderly. Although most were living with their families, these families were frequently too poor to provide for them, and the elderly persons consequently tended to see themselves as a burden.

From a survey, RIC learned that 650 elderly men and women were landless. Two hundred and fifty elderly people who satisfied the following criteria were chosen for a special project:

- Over 55 years of age;
- Widowed or single;
- Landless;
- Receiving no help from the Government or relatives;
- Receiving no help from another non-governmental organization.

Almost all of those selected needed medical attention. Many had poor eyesight; others complained of frequent headaches and bad coughs.

RIC then gave each person a medical card and arranged for a doctor to visit every two weeks, providing free medicines when necessary. When they do not have to worry about medical costs, the elderly feel more secure. It has, however, been suggested that a token charge might be introduced for medicines for those elderly who have been given land under the project's credit scheme, the idea being to discourage people from taking drugs longer than medically necessary.

RIC is running a number of income-generation programmes with a credit scheme: small-scale trading; vegetable gardening; goat-rearing; bee-keeping; and poultry-rearing. The elderly people taking part in the special project have formed interest groups centred on the various programmes and have been given training in the relevant skills. Training for the bee-keeping programme, for instance, takes 10 days. Each participant takes out a loan of 1,000 taka and is given a bee box. The honey that is produced is sold at the local market.

The social standing of these elderly persons appears to have improved. At first, some younger members of the community laughed at the idea of the elderly making a social contribution. But when they saw them taking out loans and generating income, the laughing soon stopped.

Source: Ageways, No. 27.

Brazil: preferential treatment for the elderly

The Governor of São Paulo state has announced new regulations granting preferential treatment for the elderly on public transport. São Paulo state has about 2.5 million elderly, about 23 per cent of the total elderly population of Brazil. The special measures, introduced in October 1991, include preferential treatment in the acquisition of tickets and during boarding and alighting from trains and the metro.

Source: CEFRAP Information (Rio Claro, Brazil), October 1991.

China: a better future for pensioners

China leads the world in both overall population and the number of elderly people. The number of retired workers has now reached 23 million, more than the total population of Australia. This figure is expected to reach 35 million by 2000, when it will account for 9 per cent of the population.

With a large population, a relatively weak economic foundation and low productivity, China will probably be among the countries to be hardest hit by the ageing phenomenon. It is hoped that the new social insurance system will help to avert a crisis.

In China, the elderly have traditionally lived under one roof with their children and grandchildren, there being a certain moral obligation for their families to support them. Today, the majority of the elderly in rural areas continue to rely on their children for support. Only widows, widowers and people without children to support them live on allowances provided by government departments of civil affairs. In urban areas, however, where the traditional extended family structure is gradually being replaced by the nuclear family, retirees have to rely on their pension more than ever before.

Since 1984, a new method of collecting retirement contributions has been in operation. Each month, enterprises set aside a certain percentage of wages for their active workers as social insurance premiums. This money is deposited in the bank in a special account and covers the cost of retirement pensions for all the insured workers of the enterprises. Contribution rates vary considerably throughout the country.

A decision of the State Council requires that old-age premiums for contracted workers be contributed to by both employees and employers, with the State covering any deficit. Enterprises contribute 15 per cent of the total wages of their contracted workers, while the workers themselves

An elderly person seated at the entrance to an old church in Macao

pay up to 3 per cent of their basic wages.

At Beijing, publicly owned enterprises contribute 16 per cent or more of their workers' wages each month, while collective enterprises contribute about 23 per cent. The Beijing Old-Age Insurance Premium Office is responsible for providing social insurance for 2 million active workers and 520,000 retired workers. The director, Meng Zhaosi, spoke of two of the achievements of the new scheme:

- The necessities of life are ensured for retired workers. Before the new programme was implemented, retired workers from poorly run enterprises sometimes received no retirement income;
- Services for retired workers have been improved. The Beijing municipal government is now in a position to spend a certain percentage of pension contributions on recreational facilities for retired workers.

There are, however, some problems for the scheme:

- Employees of small collective enterprises run by neighbourhood committees, private enterprises and most foreign-funded and foreign-owned enterprises are not covered;
- It is becoming difficult to cover the increasing numbers of retired workers;
- The cost of living for retired people is rising, which means their pension income must also rise.

Source: Beijing Review, vol. 34, No. 35, September 1991.

Czechoslovakia: getting organized

A non-governmental organization, Movement for the Life Security of the Pensioner (Hnutí duchodcu za zivotní jistoty), was created in December 1989 in response to the need for an organization to defend the interests of the elderly. With the economy currently undergoing radical restructuring, the elderly are the group most exposed to the hardships that restructuring has brought about. One of the main aims of the organization is to prevent a further erosion of the standard of living of the elderly.

A coordinating committee was formed within the organization to consolidate the interests of several seniors' organizations and organizations for the handicapped. With the constant flow of requests it is receiving from other organizations for associate membership, the coordinating committee believes the Movement will soon be a major pressure group.

A priority target of the organization is to gain representation in legislative bodies. The Movement took part in parliamentary elections in 1990, falling short of the required quota by a mere 0.3 per cent. The organization intends to stand again in the 1992 elections.

Through negotiations with the Government and trade unions, the organization has been able to present its own draft legislation. Some headway has already been made with regard to pensions. The organization

is currently focusing on the reformulation of a law on apartments, so that elderly people cannot be deprived of their accommodation.

The organization's activities encompass charity work, the social mission at the railway station and the provision of gainful employment. As soon as enough sponsors and patrons can be found, the organization intends to branch out into further community and cultural activities for the elderly, as well as into rehabilitative recreation. Plans are already being made for creating advisory or consultancy services run by elderly professionals as of 1993.

Ireland: reminiscence may have a future

On the basis of its highly successful application in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the therapeutic technique of reminiscence is being promoted in Ireland by Faith Gibson, a social worker at the University of Ulster. The collections of slides, photographs and booklets being used by people working with the elderly (they are known as reminiscence packs) are based on a collection that was developed by Help the Aged (United Kingdom).

The latest reminiscence pack, *Ireland Recall*, consists mainly of rural images that trigger recollections of family life, work and recreation. Another pack, *Dublin Recall*, is currently being used very successfully in psychogeriatric day hospitals in the capital.

In a therapeutic session, which takes about 45 minutes, two staff members, typically, a nurse and an occupational therapist, guide a group of about eight old people through slides. Sometimes the staff ask questions to prompt reminiscence; sometimes the group takes charge of itself, with old people discussing among themselves such topics as the price of a jug of porter when they were young or where a particular shop used to be.

The reminiscence sessions give old people a chance to get to know one another, often on a more intimate level than would otherwise be the case. It also gives hospital staff some insight into patients' past roles in life and provides them with information about the city and country that they would otherwise have no way of knowing. One of the main benefits of reminiscence is that it changes the perceptions and attitudes of younger people towards older people. The old person becomes the teacher and conveyor of information.

Apart from slides and photographs, some day hospitals have glass-framed reminiscence cabinets where such things as old hot-water bed jars, oil lamps, ration books, irons etc. are kept and taken out from time to time.

Writers' workshops have also been found useful for encouraging old people to write about their past. Ms. Gibson is currently involved with a scheme that teaches old people how to record their memories using word processors. The scheme, called "Teaching older dogs new tricks", apparently overcomes the anxiety of old people about new technology and allows them to write their life histories with less physical wear and tear than handwriting or typing. Ms. Gibson observes that they take to it "like ducks to water".

In spite of its obvious benefits, reminiscence therapy is not yet being widely used in Ireland. "Some professionals are stuck on the physical caring model, not seeing the relevance of, or finding the time for, reminiscence", regrets Ms. Gibson.

Source: The Irish Times, 4 February 1992.

Publications

E. M. Chaney, ed., *Empowering Older Women: Cross-Cultural Views* (Washington, D.C., American Association of Retired Persons).

This 72-page booklet includes a background paper by the editor on the empowerment of older women in different societies; guidelines for discussion leaders; demographic statistics on ageing in the third world; an extensive list of resources; and a bibliography.

Also featured in the booklet are the transcripts of two lively conversations in groups of women leaders who have achieved empowerment in their own societies. The women come from countries as diverse as Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and the United States of America.

The topics included intergenerational alliances; networking; action strategies; educating daughters; the cultural meanings of ageing; dilemmas of

Mohamed Salih, 60 years old, was interviewed for the Sahel Oral History Project at a refugee camp in eastern Sudan
Photo: SOS Sahel/R. Barker

Siga Gassama, a 63-year-old who spoke about her life in rural Senegal to an interviewer from the Sahel Oral History Project, Senegal Photo: SOS Sahel/A. Adams-Sow

growing older; and the importance of family.

There is no charge for single copies of the booklet. It is available from AARP International Activities, 1909 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049, United States.

N. Cross and R. Barker, eds., *At the Desert's Edge: Oral Histories from the Sahel* (London, Panos Publications Ltd., 1991)

Sahel is the Arabic word for the edge of the Sahara desert, a region characterized by low rainfall and poor soils, where some 60 million people none the less manage to make a living from the land. Over the last two decades, however, prolonged drought and man-made environmental degradation have led to successive famines and accelerating desertification.

At the Desert's Edge explores the culture, history and environment of the Sahel through the memories and recollections of the people. It draws on interviews with men and women from eight Sahelian countries, members of the poorest group of countries in the world. The material was selected from 500 interviews conducted by the British voluntary agency SOS Sahel in 1989 and 1990 and represents about 10 per cent of total, known as the Sahel Oral History Project. The selection was made on the basis of narrative interest, as well as representative views.

The book is a collection of knowledge about changing ecological conditions, conservation and agricultural practices, traditional medicines and social relationships. A valuable reference source for development workers, teachers and journalists, its blend of stories, anecdotes, opinions and information makes it fascinating reading for anyone interested in Africa and oral history. It is also a moving testimony to the resilience and resourcefulness of the Sahelian people.

The Project, which this book summarizes, was conceived as a way of enabling hundreds of people from across Sahelian Africa to inform and enlighten development "experts". In addition to recording indigenous knowledge and improving rapport with those with whom SOS Sahel and its partner agencies work, the aim of the project was to develop a practical methodology that could be incorporated into development planning, project implementation and evaluation.

By talking at length with farmers, pastoralists, refugees and other groups, it was hoped to gain a better understanding of traditional land-use practice, land tenure, farming and pastoral systems, the causes of desertification and many other aspects of Sahelian life.

The book was financed in part by the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing.

Christopher Pilley, *Adult Education, Community Development and Older People*, Council of Europe Series (London, Cassell, 1991)

Older people are a potential resource within the community that needs to be tapped and channelled if it is to be of benefit. The author, who is Senior Development Officer with the Scottish Community Education Council, takes examples from a study of 17 projects and organizations in six countries members of the Council of Europe to show how adult education can achieve this. The Council of Europe series is based on material drawn largely from seminars and research initiated and sponsored by the Council of Europe.

Productive ageing: conceptual design and practical demonstration in the Dominican Republic*

Introduction

The concept and practice of productive ageing promote the view that older people are relatively healthy and in need of avenues for involvement. Surveys in industrialized and developing countries demonstrate that when seen as a resource, those in the 55+ age group represent an opportunity rather than a crisis, a solution rather than a problem, an asset rather than a burden.

The American Association for International Ageing (AAIA) has developed a model of productive ageing and has been implementing it in the Dominican Republic since April 1991. The model identifies four primary capacities in which older people can contribute: *(a)* as workers, *(b)* as volunteers, *(c)* as teachers and learners and *(d)* as advocates.

The model strategy

These roles are integrated into a coordinated, community-based and country-wide strategy. The strategy includes community-based demonstrations; cross-sectoral involvement; country-wide sharing and exchange of resources; and links among international, national and local organizations working in ageing and development.

The strategy is designed to tap the experience and expertise of existing organizations rather than to create new ones. Because of their demonstrated interest and involvement, and because of the complex development problems and severe resource constraints facing government organizations, non-governmental organizations working specifically with the elderly play a major role. Integrated social and economic development organizations are also targeted for action.

The following 10 activities comprise the basic strategy for promoting productive ageing on a country-wide basis:

(a) Identify a group of persons influential in ageing and economic development to adapt the strategy to the particular needs and conditions of the country;

(b) Introduce the strategic plan of action to country-based and international non-governmental organizations to encourage their interest and involvement in practical research and action to promote productive ageing, particularly activities that generate income;

(c) Use existing data or develop new data on the physical capabilities and economic needs of older people;

(d) Identify methods of promoting productive ageing, including methods that promote or restore health, that encourage education or training and that provide work;

(e) Involve existing non-governmental organizations within the country and in the international community that work with many age groups and sectors;

(f) Facilitate projects with participating organizations, and develop mechanisms for linking the discrete actions being undertaken by these organizations in a variety of sectors into an integrated, country-wide effort;

(g) Facilitate practical, community-based projects that can demonstrate the productive capability of older people;

(h) Encourage the economic development community to include older people in their policy and programme agendas by providing information that will raise the general level of awareness about both the potential contributions of older people and the practical research and action initiatives that can be undertaken to promote them;

(i) Organize the participants involved in the implementation process as a national committee or organization in productive ageing that can continue to function after the initial implementation process;

(j) Prepare and disseminate information and technical materials relating to productive ageing, practical projects being undertaken and methods used.

Implementation in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic was selected as the first country for adaptation and implementation of the model strategy for three reasons: *(a)* it is a small country; *(b)* it has a vast array of private-sector organizations; and *(c)* it is the location of many practical projects that can tap the resources of older people.

The strategic planning and implementation process was initiated under the leadership of AAIA, with the participation of Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Alternate Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations; Eduardo Alvarez, a well-known physician in the United States and the Dominican Republic; and Marvin Kaiser, a United Nations consultant and Associate Dean at Kansas State University. Leaders from selected ageing and development organizations also participated in initial discussions about strategic adaptation and implementation. The Hospicio San Vicente de Paul agreed to lead the effort.

The strategy was formally adopted at a country-wide meeting held at Santiago in April 1991, in which 20 national and international organizations participated.* That meeting led

*A paper by Helen K. Kerschner, American Association for International Ageing. Views expressed in the FORUM are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

*Organizations located in the Dominican Republic that agreed, during the planning process, to participate in the initiative include UNDP; International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); the Hospicio San Vicente de Paul, Pontifical Catholic University, the Foundation for Community Development (FUDECO); the Association for the Development of Micro-Enterprises (ADEMI); Asociación Nacional de Ayuda al Anciano (ANAYA); Rotary Club; Girl Scouts; Boy Scouts; Technical University, Santiago; University of the Third Age; Plan Sierra; Pastoral of the Third Age; Santiago Development Corporation; and Hache Corporation. International organizations, corporations and other institutions supporting or participating in the initiative include United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Kansas State University; HelpAge International; health care ministries of Sisters of St. Mary of the Third Order of St. Francis (SSM); Sandoz Pharmaceuticals; Sergidev Corporation; Storz; Iolab Corporation; and Northrup and King Seed Company.

to the establishment of the National Committee on Productive Ageing to support the expansion of productive ageing activities throughout the Dominican Republic. By the end of August 1991, a broad range of organizations in urban and rural areas were participating in the implementation of the strategy, and numerous organizations were committed to providing financial support and/or technical assistance. Adaptation of the strategic planning approach began in August 1990, and implementation began in January 1991.

Activities planned or initiated by the participating organizations and coordinated by the National Committee include:

(a) A survey of the economic and social impact of ageing, sponsored by the United Nations, in cooperation with a prestigious country-based university;

(b) A revolving loan fund and initial project on nutrition and income-generating activities for older women in rural community-development organizations;

(c) Efforts by an urban development bank to promote entrepreneurship among older people;

(d) Enterprises for older people, including a laundry, a hydroponic garden, a chicken farm, a rabbit hutch and a crafts programme, based at residential institutions for older people;

(e) Training older women for midwifery, within an environmental planning and preservation organization;

(f) Health promotion and restoration projects, including eye lens implant surgery at homes for older people;

(g) Intergenerational initiatives, such as a child-care programme staffed by older women, a drug rehabilitation programme for youth and a hydroponic garden project, in homes for older people;

(h) A survey of participating organizations and the preparation of a background paper on productive-ageing activities and private-sector organizations working in the Dominican Republic;

(i) Exploration of the feasibility of setting up, within a community-based development bank, a special fund to promote senior enterprise;

Cleaning out a granary, Djeota village, Niger Photo: SOS Sahel/N. Cross

(j) The exploration of ways to encourage policy development in productive ageing by the Government;

(k) A national campaign on productive ageing that involves television, radio, posters and a seminar.

This list of projects and technical assistance is expected to grow considerably during the course of the project. As envisioned in the strategy, no new organizations have been created. Rather, emphasis has been placed on tapping existing programmes and projects. In addition to working with a variety of organizations, the project is strongly interdisciplinary. It involves economists, sociologists, university researchers, planners, agronomists, social workers, educators, retired teachers, clergy, medical care personnel, lawyers, businessmen, service providers, community activists, volunteers, community-development experts, environmental-development experts and experts in international development and ageing.

Experience so far shows that the agendas of existing organizations and projects can be expanded to include productive-ageing activities. Leaders in both ageing and development can be mobilized to work together. Private-sector organizations can be encouraged to work independently and to coordinate their activities. Research and community-based action can be initiated simultaneously to

provide guidelines for future policy and programme development. Community-based efforts can have national significance if there is coordinated planning and implementation and if information is disseminated.

Conclusion

The project is particularly significant because it is the first time that an integrated, intergenerational method for identifying and creating opportunities for older people to be productive has been designed for implementation on a country-wide basis. It is expected to stimulate action on productive ageing within ageing organizations both in the Dominican Republic itself and in integrated community- and economic-development organizations worldwide.

It has been demonstrated that with vision, innovation, hard work and cooperation, older people can be involved in and integrated into the social and economic development agendas of their communities and their country. It is not necessary to focus solely on health; it is not necessary to create new organizations especially for the elderly; and it is not necessary to spend enormous amounts of money.

Calendar of events for 1992

Date	*Venue*	*Meeting*	*Organizer(s)*
2-5 February	**Seattle, Washington, United States**	**First International Conference on Long Term Care Case Management**	**Washington Association of Area Agencies on Ageing, American Society on Ageing**
5-7 February	**Barbados**	**Caribbean Regional Meeting of HelpAge International**	**HelpAge Barbados**
8-10 February	**Brussels, Belgium**	**International conference: Changing Families in Changing Societies; with a workshop on the third and fourth generation**	**International Council of Women, in collaboration with UNOV/CSDHA**
1-5 March	**Bangkok, Thailand**	**Regional meeting: workshop to strengthen structures and operational programmes**	**Asia Regional Office, HelpAge International**
5-6 March	**Vienna, Austria**	**Inter-agency Meeting on the International Year of the Family, second session**	**UNOV/CSDHA**
9-10 March	**Vienna, Austria**	**NGO consultation on the preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women**	**UNOV/CSDHA**
9-10 March	**Vienna, Austria**	**Inter-agency Meeting on Women**	**UNOV/CSDHA**
11-20 March	**Vienna, Austria**	**Commission on the Status of Women: the contribution of elderly women to development**	**Substantive secretariat: UNOV/CSDHA**
15-18 March	**Basel, Switzerland**	**Prospects in Ageing: Sandoz lectures in gerontology**	**Sandoz Foundation, Swiss Society of Gerontology**
23-26 March	**Vienna, Austria**	**Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on Selecting Targets on Ageing for the Decade 1992-2001**	**UNOV/CSDHA**
26-27 March	**Paris, France**	**European Symposium on Ageing and Quality of Life**	**National Union of Social Welfare Communal Centres (UNCCASF), National Foundation of Gerontology (FNG), under the patronage of the Commission of the European Communities**

Date	*Venue*	*Meeting*	*Organizer(s)*
2-3 April	Vienna, Austria	Joint Coordinating Committee Meeting of UNOV/Banyan Fund	UNOV/Banyan Fund
6-10 April	Antigua and Barbuda	Seminar on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, for countries of the Caribbean region	UNOV/CSDHA
9 April	Vienna, Austria	Meeting of the Vienna NGO Committee on Ageing	UNOV/CSDHA, Vienna NGO Committee on Ageing
21-22 April	Vancouver, Canada	Together Today for Tomorrow: Seniors' Perspectives on Disability and Well-being in Our Ageing Societies, international forum	International Federation on Ageing (IFA), sponsored by the Minister of State for Seniors, Government of Canada, and One Voice, Canadian Seniors Network
23-24 April	Bratislava, Czechoslovakia	EURAG colloquy marking the 10th anniversary of the World Assembly on Ageing: Quality of Live of the Elderly in a United Europe	European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly (EURAG) under the auspices of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, in cooperation with UNOV/CSDHA, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Slovak Ministry of Health, the Czechoslovak Gerontological Society, the Gerontological Research Institute of Czechoslovakia and the European Exchange Centre on Gerontology
23-25 April	Madeira, Portugal	Conference on the Older Person and the Family: solidarity between generations	Commission of the European Communities
6-9 May	Havana, Cuba	Geriatrics 92: First Central American and Caribbean Congress	Cuban Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics
13-15 May	Liverpool, United Kingdom	International conference: Marginalization of Elderly People	Institute of Human Ageing, University of Liverpool
31 May-4 June	Jyvaskyla, Finland	Physical Activity, Ageing and Sports: Third International Conference	WHO and University of Jyvaskyla, Centre for the Study of Ageing
1-3 June	Toronto, Canada	Growing Together: an international, intergenerational conference	Ministry of Citizenship, Office for Seniors' Issues, Government of Ontario
2-5 June	Nantes, France	First European Meeting on Industrial Medicine (includes focus on health, ageing and work)	Society of Occupational Medicine and Ergonomics of the West
17-18 June	Stockholm, Sweden	Cross National Research in Gerontology: inter-Congress meeting of the ISA research committee on ageing	International Sociological Association (ISA)
30 August-3 September	Bombay/Pune, India	The first IFA global conference: Changing Status and Emerging Roles of the Elderly in the 21st Century	International Federation on Ageing (IFA)
2-4 September	Espoo, Finland	Revival of Ageing Societies: international population conference 1992	Vaestoliitto, Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation, Central Statistical Office of Finland, Finnish Demographic Society, UNFPA, European Association for Population Studies, ESPE, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Inter-

Date	*Venue*	*Meeting*	*Organizer(s)*
			national Union of Family Organizations, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
17-19 September	**San Diego, California, United States**	**International Conference on Population Ageing**	**San Diego State University, co-organized by the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, co sponsored by UNOV/CSDHA, WHO, International Association of Gerontology and IFA**
24-26 September	**Venice, Italy**	**Colloquy on community action in the local area: from institutional to home care**	**EURAG**
30 September-2 October	**St. Andrews, Scotland, United Kingdom**	**Conference on Social Integration of the Older Person**	**Social Work Service Agencies in Scotland, in partnership with the Commission of the European Communities**
1 October	**Worldwide**	**Second Celebration of International Day for the Elderly**	**All interested Governments, organizations and individuals**
1-5 October	**Barcelona, Spain**	**IX International Symposium: marking the International Day for the Elderly (1 October) and celebrating the tenth anniversary of the World Assembly on Ageing**	**FIAPA, including its 1992 committees**
14-16 October	**Beijing, China**	**Forum on Ageing**	**Government of China, China National Committee on Ageing**
15-17 October	**Chantilly, France**	**International Conference of FIAV**	**International Federation of Widows and Widowers (FIAV)**
22-23 October	**Cleveland, Ohio, United States**	**Meeting on Home Health Care and Elders: international perspectives**	**The University Center on Ageing and Health and the Department of Anthropology, Case Western Reserve University**
1992 (tentative)	**New York, New York, United States**	**Expert group meeting on population growth and age structure, in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development**	**Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations**
Autumn	**New York, New York, United States**	**Non-governmental forum on ageing in New York, coinciding with the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly**	**New York NGO Committee on Ageing, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations and UNOV/CSDHA**
Autumn	**New York, New York, United States**	**International Conference on Ageing: the General Assembly will commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing**	**Substantive secretariat: UNOV/CSDHA**

Calendar of events for 1993

8-17 February	**Vienna, Austria**	**Commission for Social Development: Third Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing**	**Substantive secretariat: UNOV/CSDHA**

Date	*Venue*	*Meeting*	*Organizer(s)*
February	Vienna, Austria	Fifth ad hoc inter-agency meeting on ageing	UNOV/CSDHA
1993	London, Copenhagen, New York, Moscow (simultaneously)	Musical event (proceeds for the work of HelpAge International)	DaneAge Foundation
1993	Copenhagen, Denmark, and Malmo, Sweden	XIV International Congress: Changing Attitudes Towards the Elderly	EURAG
12-19 June	Antibes/ Juan-les-Pins, France	The Senior European Games	Loisirs Organisation
4-9 July	Budapest, Hungary	XV International Congress of Gerontology	International Association of Gerontology
1 October	Worldwide	International Day for the Elderly	All interested Governments, organizations and individuals
1993 or 1994 (tentative)	China	Seminar on innovations in education for the elderly	UNOV/CSDHA, in cooperation with China National Committee on Ageing

Calendar of events for 1994 and beyond

1994	To be decided	International Conference on Population and Development	United Nations
1 October 1994	Worldwide	International Day for the Elderly	All interested Governments, organizations and individuals
1995	To be decided	Fourth World Conference on Women	Substantive secretariat: UNOV/CSDHA
1 October 1995	Worldwide	International Day for the Elderly	All interested Governments, organizations and individuals
August 1997	Adelaide, Australia	XVI International Congress of Gerontology	International Association of Gerontology
1 October 1997	Worldwide	International Day for the Elderly	All interested Governments, organizations and individuals

REPORT SHEET

Please provide information, as available, for items you wish to be included in the international calendar of events or global database on ageing 1991-2001:

Project title: _____

Starting date: _____

Duration: _____

Location: _____

Executing agency: _____

Street _____ City _____

Country _____ Fax _____ Telephone _____

Sponsoring agency: _____

Cooperating agency: _____

Funding sources: _____

Beneficiaries/expected results: _____

Project description/methodology:

Meeting ☐

Promotional event ☐

Research ☐

Training ☐

Development project ☐

Multisectoral cooperation ☐

Description and methodology continued ☐ Other attachments ☐

When completed, return to the Ageing Unit, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria (Fax: 232156).

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